

**BARM
BOX ELDER
COUNTY**

Date: Friday March 25, 2005

Time: 4:00 PM

Place: BLM Rosebud Cabin

Planning/scoping
meeting

Members Present: Brock Benson (NRCS), Todd Black (USU EXT) Kirt Enwright (DWR), Chet Fitzgerald (NRCS), Chris Perkins (USU), Jan Knerr (USU), Sarah Lupis (USU EXT), Alan Smith (Box Elder Economic Development), Ron Greer (DWR), Jamie Vasa (freelance writer), Allen Kunzler (Private Landowner), Lance Westmoreland (Landowner), Con Maxfield (Landowner), Mark Arana (BLM), Ken Spackman (Landowner/Chair), Royce Larson (Landowner/Co-Chair), Jay Tanner (Landowner)

Information Presented

EQIP: None of the project information has been released. Brock and Chet were on the wildlife ranking committee and it looks like Utah's will be funded this year. They hope to know, officially, within 2 weeks. Once they officially announce the projects that were funded, the NRCS will call each landowner and confirm that the individual still wants to do the project. Tremonton submitted 10 out of 15 proposals. Once individuals have confirmed, contracts will be written. This year, clearance for cultural, etc. will be completed. Typically, projects are not started, on the ground, until the following spring. Cultural clearance will be done by either the NRCS or a Technical Service Provider (TSP).

STATE: DWR will be working with the NRCS and providing seed as a match. Outside the "priority zone" projects will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. They are also working with the BLM to seed juniper removal/fuels reduction areas.

BLM: Fuels team might have a couple proposed projects. Choke Cherry Springs, Necom Canyon will be done this spring. Kimball Creek and Keg Springs will be done next fall.

USU: 30 or so females and maybe a few males will be captured this spring near where USU plans to do some habitat treatments (hopefully this fall). Jan Knerr is the graduate student who will be conducting the research. Sage-grouse captures will be conducted at night, on or near lek sites. Sage-grouse will be captured with long-handled nets by spotlighting. Captured birds will be outfitted with a radio-transmitter, aged, sexed, and weighed.

SOP: The Standard Operating Procedures were presented at the last meeting. They basically outline how the group will function. No comments were received. It is not a binding agreement; simply provides guidelines for how to do business. Page 2: statements

Discussion Highlights

MONITORING: Will the project be using a modified daubenmire method to sample vegetation? It would be helpful so that it can be compared to data collected by the range monitoring team. Kirt would like to entertain a motion that the DWR range crew set up permanent transects in the project area. What level of monitoring is needed? Todd thinks that the UPCD feels that at least one new project per region/unit (?) per year should be sampled at a high level of intensity. Kirt would like to use the modified daubenmire so that the DWR has good information about the production of forbs and grasses in the area. Kirt is trying to find out how much money it costs to add a site and then hopefully, we can find the money to cover it. There are now 2 range crews so that they can cover new projects in the state and the monitoring afterwards. They will do baseline, 2 year, 5 year, and then 5 year intervals after that. Todd suggested that a local high school science class might be able to do some of the monitoring. Photo points might also be useful in demonstrating before and after. Is intense monitoring needed on every project? Kirt feels that everything within the Rosebud and Cotton Thomas complex should be monitored intensively because that is where the sage-grouse are. The NRCS has also discussed monitoring. They need to make sure a range write up is done on all projects. NRCS monitors EQIP projects for 1 year beyond the date that the last practice is implemented. Any additional monitoring will have to be done by another party and then only with permission of the landowner, as accepting NRCS funding only obligates the landowner to allow access to NRCS. Most of the monitoring will be Utah 2 and Rangeland health monitoring that the NRCS regularly does. They can do more intensive monitoring, but typically they don't do daubenmire sampling. Vegetation monitoring will be useful to the DWR to understand trends in sage-grouse and deer winter and summer range. The NRCS reports on how far the site is away from climax community; are we going where we want to go? In combination, the daubenmire and ocular methods would be very useful. To summarize, monitoring is a critical component to the projects that will be taking place in the Resource Area. It has been recommended that additional range crew sites be added to this area. The EQIP projects do not have long-term monitoring as part of the contract. In those cases, the LWG would approach the landowner and request that monitoring be completed.

Actions Taken

The Non-Discrimination Clause was given to Ken—he and Jay signed it for the University, as per the SOP.

The SOP was amended on Page 2 to say that habitat loss “may” be a factor in sage-grouse population declines and that other factors may also influence sage-grouse populations. The group will meet on the 4th Thursday of every other month. Early evening is the best time for landowners. **The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 26th, at 6:00 PM in the Rosebud Cabin.**

Todd distributed the binders to members of the group. Binders contain a contact list, SOP, and past meeting minutes and contain room for additional documents.

Follow-up Needed

Jan to give a presentation on her project and update the group on capture progress at the next meeting.

Kirt and Ron to bring up monitoring (additional range crew sites) at the next regional UPCD meeting.

Extension (Todd and Sarah) to develop informational/instructional material about vegetation monitoring for landowners in this area. Also, to provide training and support for vegetation monitoring on EQIP projects.

Kirt to summarize current/historic information for MOU; he will provide those to USU Ext. by April 25th.

GROUP to comment on MOU and determine who will be the signatory for each group/agency.

Sarah to bring new copies of the SOP to the next meeting that reflect the changes made today.

GROUP to comment on Section 1.0 Introduction of the Conservation Plan. GROUP also to comment on ISSUES developed about a year ago. The ISSUES are being submitted to refresh everyone’s memory because they were developed nearly a year ago.

Todd and Sarah to provide group with a GLOSSARY of terms for the entire group.